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INFO RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 0823
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA 2220
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3094
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 0103
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 3021
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT 0015
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3435
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RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

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SUBJECT: TURKISH PRESIDENT PRESSES KYRGYZ COUNTERPART ON
MANAS AIR BASE

Classified By: Amb. Tatiana Gfoeller, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) On the sidelines of a May 28 opening ceremony for a new building at the International Ataturk Alatoo University in Bishkek, the Ambassador spoke briefly with visiting Turkish President Abdullah Gul, and then at length with Turkish MFA Under Secretary for Political Affairs Unal Cevikoz for a readout of Gul's May 27 one-on-one meeting with Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev. In response to a U.S. request, Cevikoz said Gul had spent much time pressing Bakiyev to reconsider the decision to close Manas Air Base. Gul reportedly raised the need to stabilize Afghanistan and underscored the damage closing Manas would have on NATO while it is "under fire" in Afghanistan. In response, Bakiyev claimed that "high-level negotiations were currently underway between the United States and the Kyrgyz Republic to reverse the decision to close Manas."

¶2. (C) Cevikoz described Bakiyev as "defensive," but added that Bakiyev assured Gul "not to worry" about the Manas issue. However, when Gul pressed Bakiyev to explain what he wanted (presumably in relation to the Manas issue), Bakiyev reportedly cited \$5 billion in U.S. assistance to Pakistan, and complained that the United States never "adequately compensated the Kyrgyz Republic nor paid any high-level attention to the country." Gul apparently responded that perhaps Bakiyev had grounds to feel aggrieved, but that with the arrival of a new Obama Administration it would be best not to start relations on such a bad foundation. "Perhaps," Gul suggested, "if you ask nicely, the Americans might pay more rent and give you more high-level attention."

¶3. (C) Cevikoz told the Ambassador the overall visit had gone "well," and included additional meetings with Prime Minister Chudinov and Parliament Speaker Tagayev. Gul is scheduled to depart Bishkek May 28.

Common Roots

¶4. (SBU) In his remarks at Ataturk Alatoo University, Gul

stressed the common ethnic roots of the Turks and the Kyrgyz, and expressed his sense of "coming home" to the Kyrgyz Republic. He praised educational cooperation between Central Asian states and Turkey, and noted that the Turkish university encouraged a "broad mindset" among its Kyrgyz students. Gul commented on the multilingual abilities of Ataturk Alatoo graduates, who speak Kyrgyz, Turkish, Russian and English, and highlighted new internet facilities at the university that connect local students to resources in Turkey, Russia and the United States.

GFOELLER